



Hot Season for Wildland Firefighters

By Coleen Vansant

Mobile County's Jim Wade directs AFC firefighters as the Bayou LaBatre Fire threatened homes and businesses in the wildland urban interface in April. Also pictured are Jason Barrett (Baldwin County) and Randy Kinman (SW Regional Fire Specialist).

Photo by Mike Kyser

Whether at home or across the state line, Spring 2007 has been busy for Alabama Forestry Commission wildland firefighters. Drought conditions across most of the state – along with unseasonably high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds – have combined to help fuel a very active spring fire season for Alabama and most of the lower South.

March came in like a lion, resulting in the third hottest fire month in the last ten years for the state. Over 1,200 fires burned almost 27,550 acres across Alabama during the month, representing 72% of our total fires and approximately 54% of our acres burned for the year.

On March 21, 2007, fourteen counties on the western side of the state were placed under a fire alert by State Forester Linda S. Casey. They included Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia, Fayette, Jefferson, Lamar, Marion, Mobile, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, Walker, Washington, and Winston. Nine more counties were added to the list on March 23rd: Elmore, Montgomery, Lowndes, Butler, Crenshaw, Macon, Bullock, Russell, and Covington. On March 26th, twenty more were placed under a fire alert: Autauga, Bibb, Chilton, Colbert, Conecuh, Cullman, Dallas, Green, Franklin, Hale, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone,

Marengo, Monroe, Morgan, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox.

By April 4, all of the counties had been lifted from the alert because of rain, cooler temperatures, and higher

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Jim Wade (Mobile County) and Tim Stokley (Washington County) on the ground, and John Baird (Washington County) battle the Bayou LaBatre Fire.

humidity. Easter weekend brought a late hard freeze for much of north and central Alabama. Although the fire alerts had been lifted, it didn't stop the fires. On April 5th a large wildfire threatened the town of Bayou LaBatre in Mobile County. Twenty-five AFC firefighters, seven law enforcement officers, and seven overhead members from the state office made their way to the coast. By April 7th when it was contained, approximately 1,061 acres had burned. AFC firefighters and the ten fire departments that responded to the blaze saved approximately 200 homes. One home was destroyed and 20 were damaged, mainly roofs.

Although the fire situation here in Alabama calmed down, it began in earnest for our neighbor, Georgia. On April 16th, a tree fell on a power line in southeast Georgia near the town of Waycross and started what was to become one of the largest fires in Georgia history. The Sweat Farm Road/Big Turnaround Fires were approximately 130,414 acres as of Monday, May 14th. Although one fire, it has been treated as two because of state and federal jurisdictions. The Sweat Farm Road Fire belongs to Georgia and the Big Turnaround Fire belongs to the Forest Service.

On Wednesday, April 18th, two crews equipped with John Deere 750s left Alabama to assist the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFA). These

firefighters included James "Jimbo" Robinson (Chambers County), Jason Berry (Walker County), Jeff Bradford (Lamar County), and Gary Thompson (Covington County). These crews assisted with the Sweat Farm Road near Waycross, returning to Alabama on May 3rd.

Northwest Regional Fire Specialist Steve Lamkin also responded to a request for law enforcement assistance by the GFA. He left on Sunday, April 29th, to serve as a fire investigation officer on the Sweat Farm Road Fire.

Two more crews were called to Georgia on Monday, April 30th, but this time by the Forest Service. Rolling with two 650s, Rusty Smith (Sumter County), Victor Howell and Russell Johnson (Conecuh County), and Bill DeYampert (Perry County) left for the Big Turnaround fire. This blaze was burning the north end of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. These men (and tractors) were set to demobilize on Tuesday, May 15th.

On Wednesday, May 2nd, the replacement crews (for the first crews that were sent

to Georgia) left Montgomery. These firefighters included Bobby Matthews (Cullman County), James "Moto" Williams (Chambers County), Gene Lyons (Calhoun County), and Jarred Kornegay (Bibb County). They were assigned to the Sweat Farm Road Fire. Also on May 2nd, Debbie Johnson from state headquarters left for the Kneeknocker Fire (Brantley and Wayne counties) as a payroll clerk. All of these associates went in assistance to the state of Georgia under the Southern States Compact.

Two days later, on Friday, May 4th, the fourth group of AFC firefighters left to assist Georgia. Taking two more John Deere 750s, Ken Colburn (Thorsby Seed Orchard), Richard McCain (Cleburne County), Walter Noland (Lowndes County), and Michael King (Butler County) left Alabama to assist Georgia on the Kneeknocker Fire.

By the middle of May, here at home wildfires were still sporadically burning across the state. By Tuesday, May 15th, Alabama had experienced 2,931 fires that burned a total of 52,180 acres year-to-date. 🌿



Balsie Butler (Talladega County) responds to St. Clair County blaze.

Georgia Wildfire Detail: Crews 1 thru 4

Right: CREW 1 being interviewed by television reporter upon return to Alabama [l to r]: **Jimbo Robinson, Gary Thompson, Jason Berry, and Jeff Bradford.**



Left: CREW 2 prepares to leave for Georgia. [Clockwise] **Rusty Smith, Bill DeYampert, Victor Howell** being interviewed by TV reporter, and **Rusty Johnson.**



Right: CREW 3 leaves from the AFC State Office [l to r]: **Jarred Kornegay, Bobby Matthews, Debbie Johnson, James "Moto" Williams, and Gene Lyons.**



Left: CREW 4 departing for Georgia with more equipment [l to r]: **Walter Noland, Michael King, Richard McCain, and Ken Colburn.**

New on the Scene . . . the AFC Media Team

By Coleen Vansant

Handling the media won't be as difficult as it once was during emergency or unusual incidents with the creation of the new Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) Media Team. The media team combines the talents of Commission personnel in the publications, information, and video/web sections to create a unique force that can assist with large media events. Members include team leaders Coleen Vansant and Mike Kyser, as well as Elishia Ballentine and Kelvin Daniels.

In the past, regions that did not have a staff information specialist often struggled with handling the collection and disbursement of information to the media, as well as coordinating media efforts during an emergency incident. Examples of situations in which the media team will be assisting might include:

- Pre-Fire Alert
- Fire Alert
- Localized Event
- Storm Details
- Western Detail
- Governor's Situation Reports
- Stand Down/Return/Wrap-up

The AFC Media Team is not intended to replace the county, regional, or state headquarter's current media contacts or associations, but will work to enhance the relationships we already have. The role of the media team will be to provide support at the county and regional level and attempt to generate and expand positive media coverage for the Alabama Forestry Commission. They will be working under the direction of the regional foresters or incident commander. Their goals are to:

- Help re-establish contacts and open the lines of communication between the media and counties/regions/state headquarters.

- Increase the overall media coverage the AFC receives statewide
- Create story ideas and work on getting media coverage

Media team members will be working with county and regional personnel according to a detailed Media Strategy that was e-mailed to the field on Friday, May 11, 2007. The new strategy will provide everyone a format to follow in order to capitalize on available media coverage. Although this strategy is not yet formally in place, the media team has had the opportunity to test it with incidents over the past few weeks including the Bayou LaBatre fire in Baldwin County in early April, crews being dispatched to assist with Georgia wildfires, and a recent fire in St. Clair County. In each of these cases, members of the media team worked closely with regional and county personnel to obtain information, draft news releases and distribute to the media, as well as get photos and video footage that was

made available to the media. Many of the photos taken have been available to the media for download on the AFC web page.

The media team is currently in the process of creating a comprehensive database of media contacts across the state including television/radio/newspaper names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Media team members have also begun an on-call rotation for weekends and after-hours. This schedule has been distributed to all AFC offices and dispatch centers so that dispatchers and fire personnel will know who to contact in the event of a likely media event. The team member on call will have the responsibility of gathering local information on the incident and then contacting all other team members if a response is warranted. If needed, media team members will then develop a plan of action and respond to the situation. 🌿



Photo by Jeremy Lowery

Taking Care of Business - Media Team consists of (left to right) Elishia Ballentine, Coleen Vansant, Mike Kyser, and Kelvin Daniels.

Ethically Speaking . . .

By Tom Conway

All employees of the Alabama Forestry Commission will be receiving a refresher course on Alabama's ethics law in the coming months. This ethics law update was one of the first priorities of new State Forester Linda Casey.

The program kicked off at the AFC headquarters office in Montgomery on April 19th. Jim Sumner, Executive Director of the Alabama Ethics Commission, explained the basics of ethics law compliance to headquarters employees. He then responded to questions specific to situations Forestry Commission employees face in their everyday work.

The session at state headquarters was videotaped and copies will be distributed to the Commission's Regional Foresters. The Regional Foresters will present the session at upcoming regional meetings, and will make arrangements for viewing by personnel who are unable to attend regional meetings. Every AFC employee will be scheduled to view the presentation by September 30, 2007.

Casey pointed out that the training on Alabama's ethics law is being provided as a preventive measure and is not an indication of potential violations by Commission personnel. In fact, she said

she has been impressed with the commitment by AFC employees to perform their work with the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

"As state employees, we all occupy positions of public trust," Casey said. "The Commission personnel I've met are very conscious of their responsibility to maintain a high standard of professionalism in their work. This seminar on ethics law will be a reminder to all of us of the accountability the public demands of us, and it will help to keep the values of honesty and integrity at the forefront of everything we do." ❁

Comprehensive Training Plan for AFC

By John Pirtle

A committee has been formed to review the Alabama Forestry Commission's existing training program and develop a statewide training plan. Comprised of representatives from the Administrative, Fire, Management, and Executive divisions, and chaired by Management Division Director John Pirtle, the committee has submitted two proposed training outlines to the Leadership Team for consideration. One outline concerns only summer intern employees. This curriculum would expose the summer interns to all

aspects of AFC programs in order to assist these individuals in making their decision on seeking permanent employment with the AFC after graduation from college.

The other outline concerns every AFC employee and includes all the necessary preparation an employee would be required to complete to be classified as fully trained. All employees will be entered into a training database, currently under development. This database will track each employee as he or she moves through the training process.

Programs are being developed that will allow each employee to take courses on the web, eliminating travel and other expenses and speeding up the training process. Obviously, not all instruction will be completed on the web, as some training requires hands-on experience.

It is hoped that this program will be approved and implemented by September 30, 2007, and all current employees will be fully trained by September 30, 2008. ❁



Forest Industries Directory

Primary and Secondary Forest Industry Information

The Alabama Forestry Commission collects information on primary and secondary wood-using industries and maintains a current database under the "Market Resources" tab on our website at www.forestry.state.al.us. This information is available to the public, free of charge. It is a valuable resource for landowners seeking timber markets, consultants seeking clients for sales, economic developers assessing the market for forest products in their areas, new and existing forest industries seeking new market areas for expansion, and other natural resource professionals for research into ecosystem services provided by Alabama's 23 million forested acres. Industries can be searched by county, industry type, products produced, or company name. ❁

Southeast Region Awards



Covington County Forestry Specialist is Honored

Forestry Specialist Gary Thompson (right) was presented with a special award recently for his unselfish attitude in volunteering in disaster response and fire situations. Some of his most recent details include service in Georgia, Oregon, and Oklahoma. Pictured presenting the award are SE Regional Fire Specialist Bruce Bowden and State Forester Linda Casey. Gary received a plaque and a rechargeable light.

Miles Receives Commendation

Montgomery Radio Operator Gertrude "Trudy" Miles [left] was awarded a State Forester's Commendation for going above and beyond the call of duty. When Telecommunications Operations Supervisor Betty Emfinger was on extended medical leave, Trudy was asked to perform the majority of Betty's duties as supervisor of the Montgomery Dispatch. She willingly and eagerly filled in and performed all of the duties of the supervisor, as well as her own. Pictured presenting Trudy with the award is SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer.



Commendations for Fitness

Five associates in the Southeast Region recently received a State Forester's Commendation for their commitment to fitness. They voluntarily surpassed the minimum requirement of their position by attempting and passing the three-mile arduous pack test. They were commended for the extra effort in meeting the requirements of the arduous test and their leadership examples in physical fitness. Pictured [l to r] are: SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer, Gary Coleman (Coffee County), Andy Guy (Lee County), Lester Williams (Geneva County), and Gary Thompson (Covington County). Not pictured is Ashley Hayden (Russell County).

Houston County is Third in Management

SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer (left) and State Forester Linda Casey (center) presented Houston County Manager Jerry Smith with his region's third place award for providing forest management recommendations to landowners. The Houston County staff provided recommendations on approximately 16,381 acres of land in their county. For their efforts they received a plaque and a rechargeable light. Not pictured are Forestry Specialists Tracy Lawrence and Gregory Taggart.





Coffee County Staff First in Landowner Services

Associates in Coffee County were first in 2006 in the Southeast Region in providing direct landowner services in their county. They earned \$50,589 in plowing fire breaks and conducting prescribed burns for their landowners. Included [l to r] in the photograph are SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer, State Forester Linda Casey, Forestry Specialist Gary Coleman, County Manager Nicholas Granger, Forest Ranger Keith Stephens, and Geneva County/Work Unit Manager Bobby Light. For their efforts they received a plaque and a rechargeable light.

Covington County Wins Management Award

The staff of Covington County was recognized recently with first place honors in their region for providing forest management recommendations to landowners. They provided recommendations on approximately 30,968 acres of land in their county. Pictured [l to r] are SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer, State Forester Linda Casey, Covington County Manager Michael Older, Forestry Specialist Gary Thompson, and Forest Ranger Keith Stephens. Not pictured is Forest Ranger Travis Chesser. They received a rechargeable light and a plaque for their office.



Macon County Earns Second in Landowner Services

The Macon County AFC Staff earned second place in the Southeast Region for providing direct landowner services. Through their combined prescribed burning and fire breaks plowed, they earned \$39,222 in income. Pictured [l to r] are Macon County Supervisor Robert Montgomery, SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer, State Forester Linda Casey, and Macon County Forestry Specialist Charles Baldwin. Not pictured is Forestry Specialist Jesse Fitzpatrick. Macon County received a plaque and a rechargeable light for their county.

Butler County Takes Home Two Awards

The staff of Butler County earned two Southeast Regional awards recently. They placed third in providing direct landowner services (fire breaks and prescribed burning) earning \$34,648, and second in providing forest management recommendations to landowners, involving approximately 10,035 acres. They received a plaque and rechargeable light for the county. Pictured [l to r] are SE Regional Forester Bruce Springer, State Forester Linda Casey, Butler County Manager Paul Hudgins, Forestry Specialists Michael King and William Perdue, and (kneeling), Forestry Worker Brandon Anthony.



Just When You Thought Things Couldn't Get Any Worse . . .

By Arthur Hitt

When three hurricanes come through your backyard within twelve months, you really begin to wonder if you're living in the right place. That's what happened to a lot of Alabama landowners. Hurricane Ivan came ashore in Alabama on Sept 16, 2004. Nine months later, Dennis followed the same path as Ivan in June of 2005. Then Katrina hit on August 19, 2005, two months after Dennis. The result was devastating to the wood basket of Alabama, with millions of dollars in damage.

It took a toll on the people as well as the land, and few people understand that better than your fellow AFC associates in LA (Lower Alabama). It was a difficult time because of the losses that people suffered, but it was also difficult because of the volume of work that had to be done in a very short period of time. I would like to tell a bit of their reforestation story, at least the part that I saw.

Knowing they were faced with a monumental task, Alabama Forestry Commission employees were out on the day of the storms to assess the damage. The county offices were flooded with requests from landowners asking what to do with their timber. To address these requests, the Alabama Forestry Commission organized landowner meetings, holding six in the Southwest Region and two in the Southeast Region. As many as 200 people attended individual meetings. The AFC was part of the Governor's Forest Recovery Task Force Team (which included the Alabama Forestry Association), whose job was to disseminate information to the public and track salvage efforts. Within three weeks after Ivan came through, the AFC had flown the counties with storm damage, as well as surveyed, mapped, and estimated the volume and value of the damaged timber. AFC State Headquarters used this information to write grant proposals to the USDA Forest Service, and local offices provided the information to landowners, foresters, loggers, and others to help with the salvage process. The federal government responded by making reforestation money available to

landowners in the form of multiple cost-share programs.

During the two years following the "Hurricanes from the Gulf of Mexico" (as they came to be called collectively at the national level), Commission personnel worked on 23 different cost-share programs, serving as technical service providers for 12 of those and originating 6 out of the 12. Baldwin, Escambia, Conecuh, Monroe, Clarke, and Wilcox Counties in the Southwest Region, and Butler and Covington in the Southeast Region were the hardest hit counties and had the majority of signups for the programs. In addition to their normal AFC duties, the increased work load due to hurricane recovery activities included damage assessment, cleanup efforts, site inspections and visits, forest management recommendations, and general requests for management advice from affected landowners.

Just when we thought things couldn't get any worse, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) decided to run an audit on the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program, aka EFCRP. For those of you that don't know (and I was one of them that didn't), the OIG works for our Congress. Its job is to make sure that the money appropriated for various programs is spent as intended. Needless to say, our organization was under the microscope for several months while the Southwest Region counties had their management plans and records audited. In the EFCRP program, we had to determine both the volume and value of the storm-damaged timber, before and after the hurricane. It wasn't an easy thing to do even once, so you can imagine how difficult it was to do a second time and get the same results. The OIG auditors and your fellow Southwest Region associates went back to the sites of the EFCRP applicants and re-measured the forestry plots, going over the management plans step-by-step to see how the damage was determined originally. The counties had to give the OIG auditors a crash course in forestry, and they, in turn, gave us a lesson in consistency and accountability. Many thanks to

Gary Cole and his associates for seeing us through the EFCRP audit.

Someone who deserves special consideration is **Madeline Hildreth**, Forest Management Specialist for the Southwest Region. Madeline did an outstanding job of coordinating the forest management work and cost-share programs that principally targeted the Southwest Alabama counties during the past two years. You have to live through it to realize just how confusing it can be to keep a dozen different cost-share programs straight, with all the requirements that are unique to each one. Madeline's organizational skills and her understanding of the type of information needed by the counties, as well as the time it takes to gather that information, made all the programs run smoother. She did a lot of work behind the scenes and is to be commended for her drive and dedication and was very instrumental in making the EFCRP audit successful.

To illustrate the point, during the OIG audit of the EFCRP program, Madeline found a flaw in the timeline that required conservation plans due back to the FSA before all the referrals had even been given to the AFC county personnel. She pointed this out to the OIG auditor, and he made a call to Washington and got the deadline extended. That was no easy feat to pull off, because very few people in the state at the time had that kind of influence.

Many Alabama Forestry Commission personnel deserve credit for their efforts and dedication in helping Alabama landowners recover from Hurricanes Ivan, Dennis, and Katrina. People from all over the state volunteered. This article has just *hinted* at some of the work done during this time period, and is still in progress. It is appropriate to give an extra note of thanks to those AFC employees who live in the hardest hit counties and continue to work daily with all the programs that support the restoration effort. My hat is off to all those dedicated Commission personnel that put forth such an extraordinary effort in helping landowners affected by the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. 🌿

Recent Retirements

Photo by Patti McAliley



With 16 years total state service and 9 years at the Forestry Commission, Telecommunications Operations Supervisor **Betty Emfinger** retired on March 29, 2007. Family, friends, and AFC associates gathered at a luncheon held in her honor at Wetumpka's Catfish Country on April 3rd. Betty is pictured receiving a plaque from Southeast Regional Forester Bruce Springer (left) and Southeast Assistant Regional Forester, Dave Duckett (right). 🌿

After 25 years of service to the State of Alabama and the citizens of his county, Crenshaw County Manager

Tim Money retired on April 30, 2007. A large group of AFC associates, family, and friends joined to help him celebrate the occasion at a luncheon at the Tom Harbin Agricultural Center in Luverne.

Pictured with Tim (center) are long-time associates, David "Skeeter" Kelley (left) and Tony Chandler (right), finally able to see eye-to-eye! 🌿



Photo by Elisha Ballentine



Mailcall

7 March 2007

To **Dan Jackson**, Walker County:

Just wanted to drop you a note to thank you for your prompt response in our area yesterday. We at Thach Volunteer Fire Department certainly appreciate your department's services. It is good to know you are there when we need you.

Sincerely,
Terry McCullar
Thach VFD

14 March 2007

To **Terry Helms** and **Joe Spradlin**, Blount County:

Thank you so much for doing what you do, with good judgment and diligence, and 24-7!

The welfare of all our communities often depends on you, and we all benefit from your skill and dedication.

In gratitude,
Nancy Jackson
Landowner at White Road and site of woods fire Sunday, March 11th

P.S. The Dowell family, owners of acreage and cabin at end of White Road, joins me in thanking you.



**The
AFC
salutes
all our
U.S.
troops!**

SPOTLIGHT:

Tallapoosa County

By Elishia Ballentine



The Tallapoosa River, named for the native Tallapoosa peoples who were once part of the Creek Confederation, flows from Georgia into east Alabama. The county, created by the Alabama legislature in 1832 from land acquired in the Creek Cession, was subsequently named for this river which flows right through its heart.

Primarily a quiet and gentle waterway today, things have not always been peaceful on this river. It was here along the banks of the Tallapoosa that one of the bloodiest battles of the War of 1812 took place. Never before or since in U.S. history have so many Native Americans lost their lives in a single confrontation, breaking the back of the Creek Nation. On March 27, 1814, American General Andrew Jackson along with over 3,300 men (including Tennessee Volunteer militia, U.S. regular army, Lower Creek warriors, and Cherokee allies) attacked 1,000 Upper Creek “Redstick” warriors, led by Chief Menawa, at a bend on the Tallapoosa River known as Tohopeka, or Horseshoe Bend. Over 800 natives died that day while defending their homeland. Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, a 2,040-acre park near Dadeville, preserves the site of this deadly and decisive conflict. Soon thereafter, William “Red Eagle” Weatherford sur-

rendered to General Jackson, and the defeated Creek people – forced to cede their land to the U.S. government – were consequently removed from Alabama soil. This event was of historical significance not only to what would soon become the State of Alabama, but also to the nation in general.

Located on the southernmost reaches of the piedmont plateau, Tallapoosa County’s terrain is best described as rolling uplands. The land area is 718 square miles, or 455,000 total acres, of which 378,000 are forested. Additionally, a little over six percent of the county is covered in water. A major characteristic of the region, Lake Martin, covers 48 square miles or 39,000 acres in Tallapoosa County. This man-made reservoir, shared with Elmore County, was completed in 1926 and has become a leading recreational destination spot.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 41,475 residents. The county seat is located in Dadeville, with other towns being Alexander City, Camp Hill, Daviston, East Tallassee, Goldville, Jackson’s Gap, and New Site. Tallapoosa County is bordered by Chambers, Clay, Coosa, Elmore, Lee, Macon, and Randolph counties.

Although Russell Corporation in Alexander City has long been the largest employer in the county, there are a variety of forestry-related industries as well. Wellburn Forest Product Industries, a sawmill, is located in Jackson’s Gap, and Mountain Valley Forest Products in Daviston utilizes lower grade lumber to produce wood products. There are a couple cabinet shops and also plans for an ethanol plant to be built in Dadeville in the coming year.

The Tallapoosa County office of the Alabama Forestry Commission, also located in Dadeville, was completed in the early 1990s. The AFC team is comprised of County Manager, David Kelly,

and two Forestry Specialists, Brian Osborn and James Yarbrough. Combined, they have 39 years total experience. In addition to sharing a

David Kelly



Hometown: Alexander City, AL

Family: Married to Kelli with one daughter, Sara Beth, age 9, and one son, Jackson, age 4.

Education/Professional

Experience: 1997 graduate of Auburn University with B.S. in Forestry. Worked in the forestry division of Alabama Power Company and as a wood dealer for Coosa Valley Woodland Services prior to the AFC.

Service with AFC: 9 years. Started in FIA, transferred to Calhoun County as County Manager in 1999, then transferred “home” to Tallapoosa County in 2005.

Hobbies: Spending time with family, coaching daughter’s softball and son’s T-ball.

Favorite aspect of job: “Having the opportunity to work outdoors while helping others.”

“work unit” with Chambers County, they also often assist with firefighting efforts in Clay County.

In 2006, Tallapoosa County recorded 69 wildfires. With a ten-year average of 53 fires per year and ranking 16th among the 67 counties, Tallapoosa County is now considered moderate for wildfire occurrences. However, that was not always the case. Retired County Manager Skip Turner (1974-1981) stated that in the old days, it was not unusual to have 280 to 350 wildfires per year, most with questionable starts. He said some days there were as many as 15 to 25 fires in one day! He also remarked on the clear cutting trend of his era when thousands of acres were replanted in pines, noting that in 1978, Tallapoosa County led the nation in the

Brian Osborn



Hometown: New Site, AL

Family: Married to Cindy with one daughter, Leah, age 4.

Education/Professional

Experience: 1980 graduate of New Site High School. Worked for Kimberly Clark Corporation for 4 years prior to coming to AFC.

Service with AFC: 20 years with 2 years in Jefferson County, 8 in Clay County, and 10 in Tallapoosa.

Hobbies: Spending time with family and hobby farming.

Favorite aspect of job: “Fire control, firebreaks, and conducting prescribed burns.”

federal Forestry Incentives Program (FIP).

The AFC firefighting equipment consists of a 2002 John Deere 550-H with a 2002 Freightliner 80 and a 1988 John Deere 550-G with a 1986 Ford 8000 transport. Their three pickups include a 2008 Ford F-250, a 1998 Chevrolet 1500, and a 1995 Chevrolet 2500.

The AFC associates work closely with the county’s 13 volunteer fire departments as well as Alexander City’s paid fire department. The Association of Volunteer Fire Departments (AVFD) holds its monthly meetings at the AFC office. One of the association’s latest accomplishments was obtaining a Smokey Bear sign for the Paces’s Point VFD from grant monies.

The majority of the time, the Tallapoosa County personnel are working on forest management projects. Each year they produce about 12 management plans, conduct 400-500 acres of prescribed burns, and construct 12-15 miles of fire breaks. They are pleased to report that Southern Pine Beetle has not been a problem in recent years. The last time there was a severe outbreak was 1999.

There are 21 TREASURE Forests in Tallapoosa County, and they are fortunate to have a strong Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) chapter with 65 members. According to David, the consolidation of the ATFA Chapter with the original Tallapoosa County Forestry Planning Committee several years ago ultimately empowered the landowners, rather than having two groups. They conduct two landowner tours each year – spring and fall – and two educational suppers.

At the time of this interview, the AFC staff was busily coordinating and preparing for an upcoming Forest Landowners Field Day at the property of Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Jennings in Hackneyville. Additionally, the associates were gearing up to assist with this year’s Classroom in the Forest program, as they do every year, which is available to all fifth grade classes in Tallapoosa County. In 2006, 485 students participated over four days: two days with landowner Danny Baker and two with landowner Bob Daniel.

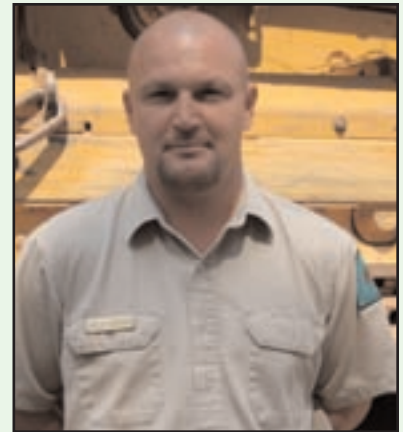
David states that one of the most rewarding parts of his job is knowing

that he and his staff are helping their landowners by teaching them to help themselves with forestry management skills.

The Tallapoosa County crew also enjoys helping others by participating in emergency details in other parts of the state and nation. Brian worked on both Hurricanes Dennis and Ivan details, and in 2006, David and James traveled to Oklahoma as wildland firefighters.

Whether at home in the forests of their native Tallapoosa County or fighting fires across the country, these Commission associates love the outdoors and they love what they do! 🍁

James Yarbrough



Hometown: Ray Community in Coosa County (currently resides in New Site, AL)

Family: Married to Kristal with two sons: Caleb, age 9, and Luke, age 7.

Education/Professional

Experience: Graduated from Benjamin Russell High School in Alexander City, then worked for Russell Corporation.

Service with AFC: 10 years. Hired as Forestry Worker in 1997, promoted to Forest Ranger/Tech, then promoted to Forestry Specialist.

Hobbies: Spending time with family, hunting, fishing, and horseshoe tournaments.

Favorite aspect of job: “Fire-fighting and working outdoors.”

Northeast Region Awards

Five-Year Pins Awarded

Associates receiving their 5-Year pins are standing [l to r] Joe Spradlin (Blount County), James "Jimbo" Robinson (Chambers County), and Lakedra Byrd Milton (NE Regional Staff). Seated [l to r] are Shane Woodham (Cherokee County), Gene Lyons (Calhoun County), and Dan Green (DeKalb County).



NE Associates Reach Milestone

(Left) Three associates in the Northeast Region were recently awarded their state service pins for reaching the 10-Year milestone. Pictured [l to r] are Doug Smith (Blount County), Ricky Porch (Coosa County), and Keith Niedermeier (Cherokee County).



Fifteen Years of Service

(Right) Associates awarded 15-year service pins in the Northeast Region were standing [l to r]: Charlie Wise (Randolph County), Lynn Washington (DeKalb County), Philip Horne (Talladega County), Derrick Heckman (St. Clair County), Terry Helms (Blount County), and Willie Holston (St. Clair County). Seated [l to r] are Philip Drake (Madison County), Barry Snow (Randolph County), Linda Reeves (Brownsboro Dispatch), and James "Moto" Williams (Chambers County).



Long-Time Service Recognized

(Left) Associates in the Northeast Region reaching 20 or more years of state service were also awarded their pins. Pictured [l to r] are Greg Wood (NE Regional Staff with 20 years), Laverne Slayden (NE Administrative Secretary in Dadeville with 35 years), Brian Osborn (Tallapoosa County with 20 years), and Phearthur Moore (NE Regional Forester with 30 years). Not pictured is Gladys Dailey (Blount County with 25 years).



Casey Becomes Honorary NE Region Firefighter
State Forester Linda Casey was officially made an honorary firefighter in the Northeast Region when she was presented a can of Vienna Sausages and a Snacpac by Regional Forester Phearthur Moore. Now she has everything she needs to go on the fire line.

Northeast Regional Forester Phearthur Moore and State Forester Linda Casey presented several awards during a recent staff meeting at Palisades Park in Oneonta in Blount County.



Chainsaw Certificates Awarded -

Associates completing the S-212 Chainsaw Training course and earning certificates were [standing l to r]: James "Jimbo" Robinson (Chambers County), Phillip Drake (Madison County), Charles Wise (Randolph County), Joe Spradlin (Blount County), Balsie Butler (Talladega County), Keith Niedermeier (Cherokee County), Jason Wolf (Etowah County), Doug Smith (Blount County), John Goff (Clay County), Lynn Washington (DeKalb County), Paul Williams (Cleburne County), James

Yarbrough (Tallapoosa County), Josh Benefield (Clay County), James Barker (Cleburne County), Shane Woodham (Cherokee County), Willie Holston (St. Clair County), Lakedra Byrd Milton (NE Regional Staff), Justin Kinney (Marshall County), and Milton Ellington (Coosa County). Seated [l to r] are Bruce Bradford (Jackson County), Nick Jordan (Clay County), Michael Williams (Marshall County), Philip Smith (Etowah County).

Instructor Training Course Graduates

Receiving certificates for the USDA Forest Service Instructor Training Course (ITC) are: Standing [l to r] Terry Helms (Blount County), Justin Kinney (Marshall County), and Shane Woodham (Cherokee County). Seated [l to r] are Bruce Bradford (Jackson County), Nick Jordan (Clay County), and Joe Spradlin (Blount County). Presentations were made by NE Region Fire Specialist Greg Wood and Outreach Forester Lakedra Byrd Milton.



Green Pants Award

Several associates in the Northeast Region were awarded the Green Pants Award by the USDA Forest Service. It was given to people who volunteered for various hurricane details. Evidently residents in the hurricane-damaged areas came to recognize various forestry agency people as "those guys in the green pants." Standing [l to r] are Terry Helms (Blount County), Derrick Heckman (St. Clair County), and Barry Snow (Randolph County). Seated [left to right] are Jeff Keener (Etowah County) and Gene Lyons (Calhoun County).

Northeast Region Honors Regina Miller

Much to her surprise, Regina Miller, Assistant to the State Forester, was honored recently at the Northeast Regional Staff Meeting for her assistance to the field. Regional Forester Phearthur Moore asked State Forester Linda Casey to make the presentation to her staff person. According to Moore, Regina is always professional and goes out of her way to assist the regions in any way she can. Blount County, where the award was presented, is Regina's home county.



You're Never Too Old to Hit the School Books

By Coleen Vansant

There is an old saying that having children and going to college are for young people. If that's the case, then St. Clair County Forestry Specialist Willie Holston did it *half* right. He had his children when he was young, but waited until he was 44 years old to begin his college career. A lifelong native of the Margaret Community in St. Clair County, his quest for knowledge began while being a husband to wife Teresa; father to daughters Brittany, 18, and Gabrielle, 12; a full-time forest ranger; and a part-time Special Forces soldier.

Willie came to the Commission in 1989 as a forest ranger after graduating from St. Clair County High School in 1981. He joined the Army National Guard – 20th Special Forces Unit, stationed in Decatur – and is still active in that unit. He holds the ranks of Senior Command Sergeant and Senior Jump Master Instructor. Much of his initial training was held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and he returned there in 2001 for a two-year Special Forces School.

After high school Willie attended Jacksonville State University for a short period of time, “but I did not have the college mind.” He says it was sometime after his last deployment that he told himself, “You need to do something constructive.” After discussing it with his wife he decided that he would go back to school. “It was surreal. I kept saying, ‘I can’t believe I’m actually doing this.’” Willie admits the hardest part was that he had not been to school in 20-something years, and the worst class he had was statistics and analyses.

“This was something my parents always wanted,” Willie explained. “I am the first of their children to graduate from college.” He is the youngest of ten with three brothers and six sisters.

It was tough balancing a very demanding job, military duty, and family life, but a determined Willie enrolled in the Faulkner University adult education pro-

gram. He took classes on-line and attended night classes from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the Birmingham campus twice a week. He adds that sometimes he had to go to the Montgomery campus for direct study. In two and a half years, Willie received his Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resource Management, graduating on December 8 of this past year.

Willie very graciously extended his appreciation to his County

Birmingham. “I hope I have been a model for my kids.”

When asked if he would be looking for a career in his new field of expertise, Willie said no. “This was a personal

accomplishment. I’m not actively looking for employment.” However, he added that if something came up inside the Commission he would definitely apply for it.



Postscript:

Actually, Willie was very smart even as a young man. Walking the halls of St. Clair County High School in Odenville, he would often smell the delicious aromas of cooking food coming from the Home Economics department. Where Willie’s brilliance came in far and above other young men his age was that he realized that where the food was – so were the girls. So, his senior year Willie enrolled in home economics. Willie was so successful in his endeavor, that much to the amazement and envy of his female kitchen-mates he was awarded the Home Economics Award during graduation commencement. As the only male to ever win the award, Willie is still a legend at St. Clair County High School. 🌿

***Authors Note:** I went to St. Clair County on Thursday, April 10th, to interview Willie. During our conversation, he said he was expecting his military orders by the 15th. Before I left that day, Willie was faxed his orders to report to Decatur the next week for six weeks pre-mobilization training. Please remember Willie, his wife Teresa, and daughters, Brittany and Gabrielle, in your thoughts and prayers.*



Manager, Derrick Heckman, and fellow ranger, Scott Sweat, for their pitching in and doing more on the nights he had to go to school. He also thanked his wife and daughters for being “a motivating factor for me.”

The graduate added that one of the best things to come out of his going to school and getting his degree is that it has been “an incentive for my oldest child.” Brittany is finishing up her first year at Jefferson State Junior College in

FIA Program in Alabama

By Brian Hendricks

History and Current Status of FIA Program

Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) is a nationwide timber and forest resource inventory that has been ongoing for approximately 70 years in Alabama. Prior to 1997 the USDA Forest Service would conduct a periodic survey approximately every ten years. However, the Forest Service and the states agreed that a ten-year interval between surveys was too long, due to increases in demand of forest products and changes in land use. In 1997 the Forest Service and the Alabama Forestry Commission agreed to let the AFC take over the data collection aspect of the survey.

Beginning with the 1997 survey, the plot design changed from a 10 prism-point layout to a 4 fixed-radius plot layout. Initially, the AFC had ten crews with assigned work zones. With the help of Forest Service crews in 2000, the state survey was completed in January of 2001. Beginning in 2001, a continuous annual survey was implemented in which 20% of the total number of FIA plots were surveyed each year so that after five years, a full FIA cycle would be completed. (Note: A cycle consists of all FIA plots distributed throughout the state. The yearly allocation of plots to be surveyed is referred to as a panel.) In late 2005 the last panel of plots was completed for the cycle that began in 2001.

Currently, there are eight full-time employees assigned to FIA: six crew leaders, one full-time assistant, and the FIA Coordinator. In early 2006, the FIA crews began surveying plots in the first panel of a new cycle. A decision had been made by AFC upper management to go to a seven-year cycle beginning in 2006, which meant that crews would be surveying a 15% panel each year. Today, crews are surveying plots in the second panel of the current cycle.

Data Collected from FIA Plots


There are 5,572 survey plots distributed throughout the state, for the most part at an approximate 3 X 3 mile spac-

ing. The majority of the plots were established in the 1930s. However, for various reasons, a few new plots are established each year. The plots exist on all types of ownership (private, industrial, and public). Each crew leader has a county employee as an assistant when surveying plots. The crews collect a wide variety of timber and other forest resource data from each plot. Some of the more important data collected includes forest type, stand size, type of regeneration, treatments, and/or disturbances since the last survey. Four different subplots make up one entire plot. At each subplot, all trees 5" DBH (diameter at breast height) and greater are tallied within 24.0' of subplot center. For each tallied tree, a DBH is collected and a height is measured, and each tree is given a tree class, crown class, and crown ratio. If any rot is found in the tree, then a percentage of cubic foot cull is recorded up to a 4" top. For sawtimber-sized trees, additional measurements are taken including log grade and amount of board-foot cull. Each subplot has a microplot associated with it. The microplot is located 12 feet and 90 degrees from subplot center. At the microplot, saplings and seedlings are tallied within 6.8 of microplot center.

Importance of FIA Survey

Economic Development: Most of the information pertaining to forest resources and their availability for new and expanding forest industries is obtained from the FIA survey data.

Forest Management Decision-Making: To make good forest management decisions, competent professionals must have good and timely information about the current conditions of our forests. FIA data is a primary source of current forest conditions.

Environmental Policy: Environmental policy makers and regulators are using the FIA information as the basis upon which public environmental policy on forest use is developed and results monitored over time. 

Upcoming AFC Training

Fire Cause Determination (I-210)

May 21-25, 2007

Time: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm each day

Location: Blue Lake Methodist Camp, Andalusia

Note: Class is full – no vacancies

Portable Pumps (S-211)

June 4-7, 2007

Location: USDA FS Work Center at Talladega National Forest

BMP Training

June 21 and 27

Location: Southwest Region
(contact Jeremy Lowery for info)

Business Management (S-260)

Tentative for June (dates & location to be announced)

Fire Ops in the Wildland Urban Interface (S-215)

Tentative for July (dates & location to be announced)

Task Force/Strike Team Leader (S-330)

Both classes are tentative for August (dates & location to be announced)

Safety Officer Type III Public Information Officer

Both classes are tentative for September (dates & location to be announced)

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV)

will be taught at regional level on an as-needed basis.

Chainsaw Certification (S-212)

will be taught by regional instructors on an as-needed basis.

CPR/AED/First Aid

will be handled at the regional level on an as-needed basis.

For more information, contact:
Training Officer Steve Bowden at
SL 334-239-1152.

State Headquarters Holds “First” Safety Meeting

By Coleen Vansant

History was made on the afternoon of April 19, 2007, when the State Office staff attended their first safety meeting – or at least it’s history-making as far back as Harold Taft can remember.

Being an organization so committed to safety, for some reason that philosophy never filtered up to the state headquarters. New State Forester Linda Casey saw the need and requested that a State Office Safety Committee be formed to deal with safety policies and procedures surrounding the facilities and jobs at the Montgomery headquarters.

Members of the new committee are Coleen Vansant – Chair, Jerry Dakins, Paula Stinchcomb, Mark Sullivan, Harold Taft, and Allen Varner. This committee held their first organizational meeting on April 3 and made the following recommendations to the State Forester, which she approved.

- HQ safety training will be held each month.
- Anyone that can attend, should.
- So that everyone will buy off on the importance of safety in the state headquarters, the four divisions and the safety committee should rotate responsibility of the monthly meetings.
- To assist in planning the safety meetings, the committee will develop a list of suggested topics as ideas for the divisions (if they can’t come up with their own).

- Unless some type of specialized training is involved, the meetings should not exceed one hour: 15 minutes for opening remarks, 30 minutes for presentation, and 15 minutes for Q&A and wrap-up.

- There will be a sign-in sheet that each attendee should sign and Personnel will keep a record of this.

- The committee will place suggestion boxes in the building for employees to place concerns and questions.

- Because the agency safety procedures manual does not include safety in offices/ buildings, the committee will work on general procedures that can apply to all AFC structures. This will be presented to the Statewide Safety Committee for consideration.

The first general Safety Meeting was held on April 19 in the state office auditorium with 31 people attending. Jerry Dakins of the Administrative Division made a presentation on headquarters building safety procedures, including the alarm systems, elevator emergencies, lockup procedures, general procedures for evacuating the building, and safety procedures for severe weather conditions. Associates freely participated in the meeting by asking questions, giving suggestions, and expressing their concerns about safety in the building.

In addition to planning meetings, the HQ Safety Committee will be working on other issues pertaining to safety in the Montgomery facility which include:

- Obtain OSHA/NSC-approved first aid kits for the state office.

- Work on getting state office building policies, procedures, and guidelines for emergency situations developed into written form.

- Develop “You Are Here” signs for the state office, as well as directional signs to elevators, stairs, lobby, exits, etc.

- Review the American Disabilities Act to ensure we are in compliance and see if there is anything we can do to make our facility more handicap-friendly.

Upcoming HQ Safety Meeting Dates and Topics:

- Thursday, May 24, 2007**

9:30 a.m. - Executive Division: Paula Stinchcomb, will go over Risk Management procedures including what to do if you or your employee is injured, forms to complete, gate-keepers, etc.

- Thursday, June 28, 2007**

9:30 a.m. - Safety Committee: Phearthur Moore – Basic Self Defense. Safety measures on how *not* to be a victim, and what to do if you become one.

The State Office Safety Committee extends an invitation to anyone who would like to attend. Meetings will be held in the auditorium. 🌿



ON THE JOB - State Forester Linda Casey gears up for her first wildfire in Walker County on March 19, 2007, pictured with Larry Wright (Jefferson County) and Dan Jackson (Walker County Manager) . . . then attends her first Board of Commissioners’ meeting on April 10, seated beside Commissioner Randy Gilmore. 🌿

Around the State

Photo by Coleen Vansant



Hildreth Receives Special Recognition

Southwest Regional Management Forester Madeline Hildreth was presented a recognition plaque by Regional Forester Gary Cole recently during a staff meeting in Thomasville. The plaque read, "In Recognition of Extraordinary Support of the SW Region Management Program, Fiscal Year 2005-2006." Madeline led the region in meeting or exceeding all of their management goals. 🍁



Photo by Coleen Vansant

Northwest Region Honors Stinchcomb

Northwest Regional Forester Wayne Strawbridge presents Personnel Officer Paula Stinchcomb with special recognition during a Northwest Region staff meeting in Jasper. The NW Region honored Paula because of all of the help she gives with personnel and payroll matters. Paula is always willing to help anyone, and she puts in the extra effort to help solve problems. 🍁

Photo by Elishia Ballentine



Regional Winners - State Forester Linda Casey recently requested each Regional Forester to select an employee deserving of special recognition. Those nominated were NW Region: Dan Jackson, Walker County Manager; NE Region: Keith Niedermeier, Cherokee County Forestry Specialist; SW Region: Rusty Smith, Sumter County Forestry Specialist; and SE Region: Mike Older, Covington County Manager. The four received free admittance to the Alabama Wildlife Federation's (AWF) Tri-County Wild Game Cook-Off held on April 26, 2007, at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course in Prattville and a one-year AWF membership. 🍁

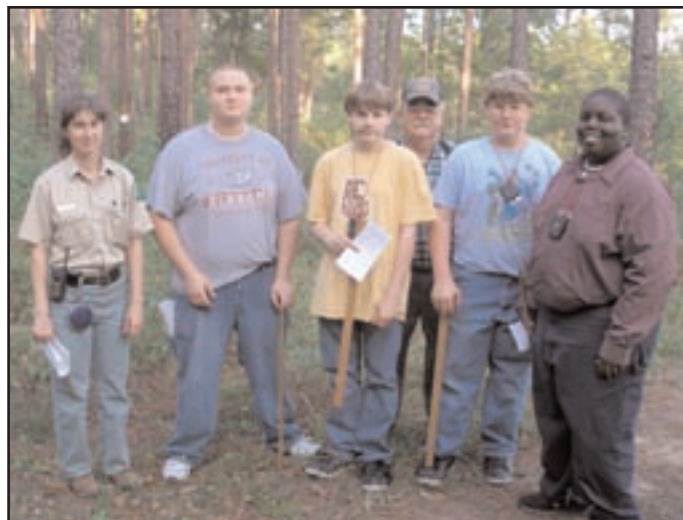


Photo by John Pirtle

Education: An important part of the AFC Mission

Brigetta Giles, Autauga County Manager, spent one afternoon each week for several weeks teaching students with the FFA forestry team at Billingsley High School prior to their FFA District Forestry competition. Involvement in FFA and similar organizations on the county level is encouraged. 🍁

PERSONNEL

HAPPENINGS

Note: This report reflects AFC employment changes from October 2006 through March 2007.

NEW FACES

John Baird

Forest Ranger Tech
SW Region - Washington County
10/16/2006

Linda Casey

State Forester
Executive Division - State Office
2/1/2007

ADVANCEMENTS

Gene Lyons

Forestry Specialist
NE Region - Calhoun County
10/16/2006

Keith Niedermeier

Forestry Specialist
NE Region - Cherokee County
10/16/2006

James Robinson

Forestry Specialist
NE Region - Chambers County
10/16/2006

Beverly Weldon

Radio Operator
SE Regional Office - Montgomery
10/16/2006

Shane Woodham

Forestry Specialist
NE Region - Cherokee County
10/16/2006

RETIREMENTS

Randy Cannon

County Manager
SW Region - Escambia County
1/1/2007

Betty Emfinger

Telecommunications Operations Supervisor
SE Regional Office - Montgomery
3/31/2007

Tim Money

County Manager
SE Region - Crenshaw County
5/1/2007

Linda Valeska

Attorney IV
Executive Division - State Office
3/1/2007

SEPARATIONS

Steven Burns

Forest Ranger Tech
NE Region - Randolph County
2/19/2007

James Alton Carr

Forest Ranger Tech
SW Region - Mobile County
1/2/2007

Craig Frazier

Management Specialist
Forest Management - Hauss Nursery
10/6/2006

Freddie Frederick

Forest Ranger Tech
NW Region - Lawrence County
3/23/2007

Coty Galloway

Forest Ranger Tech
NE Region - Calhoun County
3/9/2007

Tamara Jenkins

ASA III
SE Regional Office - Montgomery
2/20/2007

Jeffrey Metcalf

Building Maintenance Supervisor
Administrative Division - State Office
3/9/2007

Diane Shepherd

ASA II
Fire Division - State Office
2/16/2007

Scott Vasser

Forester
NW Region - Morgan County
11/13/2006

Dewey Weaver

Forest Ranger Tech
NW Region - Morgan County
12/15/2006

Photo by Elishia Ballentine



Arbor Day Festivities

First Lady Patsy Riley read the Governor's Proclamation and helped elementary students from across the state plant a bur oak on the State Capitol lawn in celebration of Arbor Day on February 23, 2007. 🌿

Photo by Elishia Ballentine



MILESTONES

*Note:
Anniversaries reached since March 2007 will
be reported in the next edition of TREETopics.*

Five Years

Elisha Ballentine
Publications, State Office

Christopher Brewer
NW Region - Lauderdale County

Jeffie Cotney
SE Region - Lee County

Benjamin Crawford
SW Region - Clarke County

James Daniel
NW Region - Lauderdale County

Steven Jones
NW Region - Cullman County

James Robinson
NE Region - Chamber County

Jospeh Spradlin
NE Region - Blount County

Charles Squires
SW Region - Escambia County

Ten Years

Ruth Garner
NW Region - Fayette County

Sammy Holdsambeck
NW Region - Bibb County

Huey Jones
SE Region - Henry County

James Payne
SE Region - Dale County

Ross Presley
SW Region - Baldwin County

Stephanie Roberts
Forest Management Division - State Office

Fifteen Years

Karl Byrd
NW Region - Lamar County

Cora Coleman
NW Region - Lauderdale County

Kenneth Harbison
NW Region - Shelby County

Michael Kyser
Audio Visual - State Office

Twenty Years

James North
SW Region - Conecuh County

Twenty-Five Years

Everett Brown
NW Region - Tuscaloosa County

Gladys Daily
NE Region - Blount County

Jerry Dwyer
Administrative Division - State Office

Johnny Kline
SW Region - Monroe County

Thirty Years

Phearthur Moore
NE Region - Gardendale

Thirty-Five Years

Laverne Knox Slayden
NE Region - Dadeville

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION 2007 REGIONAL MEETINGS

NORTHWEST REGION

June 13, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Bevill State Comm College
Fayette

September 12, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Location: TBA

December 12, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Location: TBA

NORTHEAST REGION

July 25, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Blount County Office,
Oneonta

October 24, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Western Sizzlin'
Oxford

SOUTHWEST REGION

June 14, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Thomasville VFD
Thomasville

September 13, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Thomasville VFD
Thomasville

December 13, 2007
9:30 a.m.
Thomasville VFD
Thomasville

SOUTHEAST REGION

April 26, 2007
9:15 a.m.
Troy Arboretum
Troy

July 26, 2007
9:15 a.m.
Troy Arboretum
Troy

October 25, 2007
9:15 a.m.
Troy Arboretum
Troy

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

BOB RILEY
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALABAMA

STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

(334) 242-7100
Fax: (334) 242-0937



May 16, 2007

Ms. Linda S. Casey
State Forester
P.O. Box 302550
Montgomery, AL 36130-2550

Dear Ms. Casey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Alabama Forestry Commission's recent involvement in responding to two major wildfires in the Bayou La Batre area. It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, as well as all of the men and women that make up the Commission, my sincere appreciation for your level of service to the State of Alabama.

The Commission's quick and decisive response to these wildfires is ultimately the key to your continued success in combating potential disasters of this magnitude. To that end, please let me express my sincere appreciation for your hard work and dedication to the betterment of this great state. Your hard work does not go unnoticed.

Again, I appreciate your honorable service and commitment to the State of Alabama. Continue to keep up the great work!

Sincerely,


Bob Riley
Governor of Alabama

BR/ps/jcd



Hardwood Tour in Dallas County

AFC Dallas County Manager **Tom Lang** conducts one of the tours as the Southern Hardwood Forestry Group held their Spring 2007 meeting on April 19 near Selma. The Alabama Forestry Commission co-hosted the meeting along with Buchanan Hardwoods, Inc.

Field tours consisted of mature bottomland hardwood forests on the Alabama River as well as stands of 1- to 15-year-old cost-share tree planting projects on Blackland prairie soils, with emphasis on oaks and green ash. The conference was held for the first time in conjunction with the Southeastern Hardwood Forestry Group, which included research foresters, wildlife biologists, and hardwood managers not only from across Alabama, but also from Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Attendees represented private entities and industry, as well as state and federal government agencies. 🌿



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Jett Freeman, Randy Gilmore, Jerry Lacey, Melisa Love, and Kenneth Real

State Forester: Linda Casey

Assistant State Forester: Timothy C. Boyce

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